

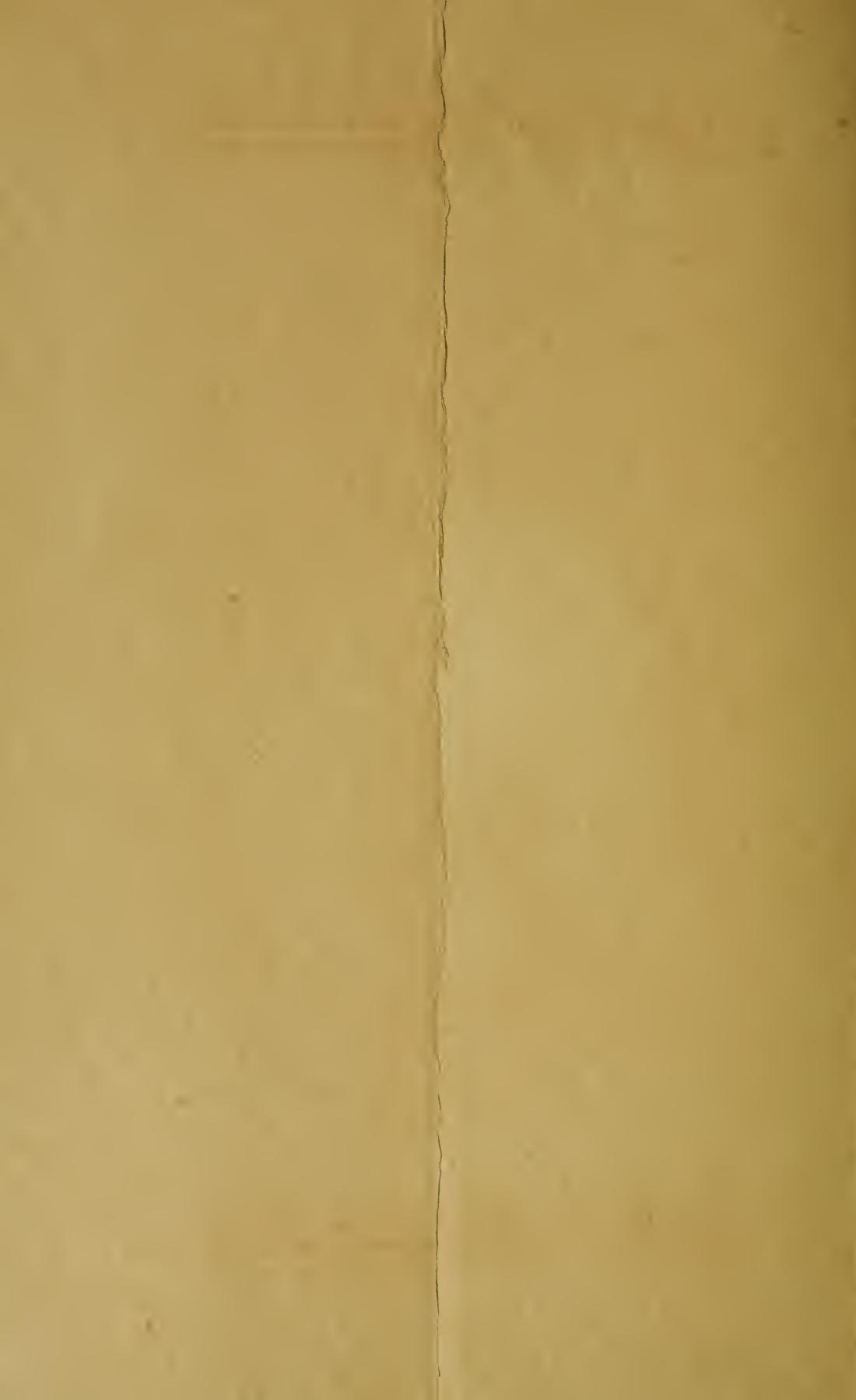
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BILLY"



By FRANK MAHLON





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FREDERIC M. HOBLITT
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BILLY

By

FRANK MAHLON

11



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No. 1

“**B**ILLY” was written for but one purpose: to commemorate the faithfulness of the Western Mustang as he was known by a few. His tenacity, courage and usefulness will ever be remembered by that few. He had no superior among horses for the work he was called upon to do. His was no small part in the building of a nation.

FRANK MAHLON.

*He was black as a gambler's future,
And as sound as Government Bonds;
He'd an eye like a Spanish beauty,
And a head like a sculptor's bronze.*

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BILLY

Billy was a little buck mustang
That I bought for eight dollars in gold,
Roped him myself from a thousand,
When he was three years old.
And he fought like a mother panther,
Who defends her cubs in a cave;
He seemed to cry for his freedom
As I lassoed and made him a slave.

Made him a slave did I tell you?
Well, it wasn't quite that bad,
I made him my friend and companion,
The truest that I've ever had.
He grew to know me as his master,
And never once failed on the ride;
We went through hell together,
And I kept him until he died.

He was black as a gambler's future,
And as sound as Government Bonds;
He'd an eye like a Spanish beauty,
And a head like a sculptor's bronze.
When he first felt the weight of the saddle,
And the cinches were drawn up tight,
He looked to me for pity,
And I helped him in his fright.

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by others
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I loosened the ropes at his fetlocks,
He could go where he would, you see;
Then I rode on beside him,
While he fought to become saddle free.
When the poor little devil was winded,
He turned and came to my side,
And believe me or not, I will tell you---
There were tears in his eyes, for he cried.

I patted his nose and caressed him
As a mother would her child;
I let him see that I loved him---
And then, by God, he smiled.
He was my friend ever after,
Which he proved in a thousand ways
As we cut the trail together
In the weary after days.

When the rays of the sun were hottest,
And they burned like molten lead,
Billy would stand for hours
To shadow my blanket and bed.
And when the zero weather came,
And we had to take our turn,
It was Billy who gave his warmth to me,
For we had no fire to burn.

There came a call from the frontier,
A message had to go West
To the border of the Bad Lands,
And a rider was wanted, the best.
There were plenty of damn good riders,
And all knew the task it would be,
But when the coin was finally tossed,
The lot fell to Billy and me.

We left the camp one morning,
As the sun came over the plain,
And Billy looked back as we started,
Seemed to say: "I'll not see you again"---
It was five hundred miles to the border,
As the Homing Pigeon takes flight;
Over prairie grass spread like an ocean---
We did most of our journey by night.

It was hotter than Hell in the day time,
And the prairie supplies you no trees,
So we had to keep moving by starlight,
For unless we did, we would 'freeze'.
Through the long miles of this grass land
Billy never once offered to quit.
In about ten nights of hard riding
We turned the out point of our trip.

Were you ever out on a prairie?
Or see a mirage of cool springs?
Did you ever drink alkali water
And suffer the pain that it brings?
Have you ever been dog-mad for liquid?
When your tongue and your eyes seemed
to burst?
Well, Billy and I just staggered along,
We were slowly dying of thirst.

I had filled my canteens before leaving,
And Billy had drunk the last drop.
And visions of dreamland cities
With mountains of gold piled on top
Were passing through my failing mind,
For now I had lost all pain---
Now I was sure we were tramping
In fields of mud and rain.

But we came up to the river
When it seemed that all was lost,
Where we had our fill and plenty,
And soon forgot the cost.
We were coming to the end of our journey,
And I was feeling my best.
Fifty miles more to travel,
Then Billy and I would rest.

10	10
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W	W
3A	3A
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4W	4W

10
hA
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W
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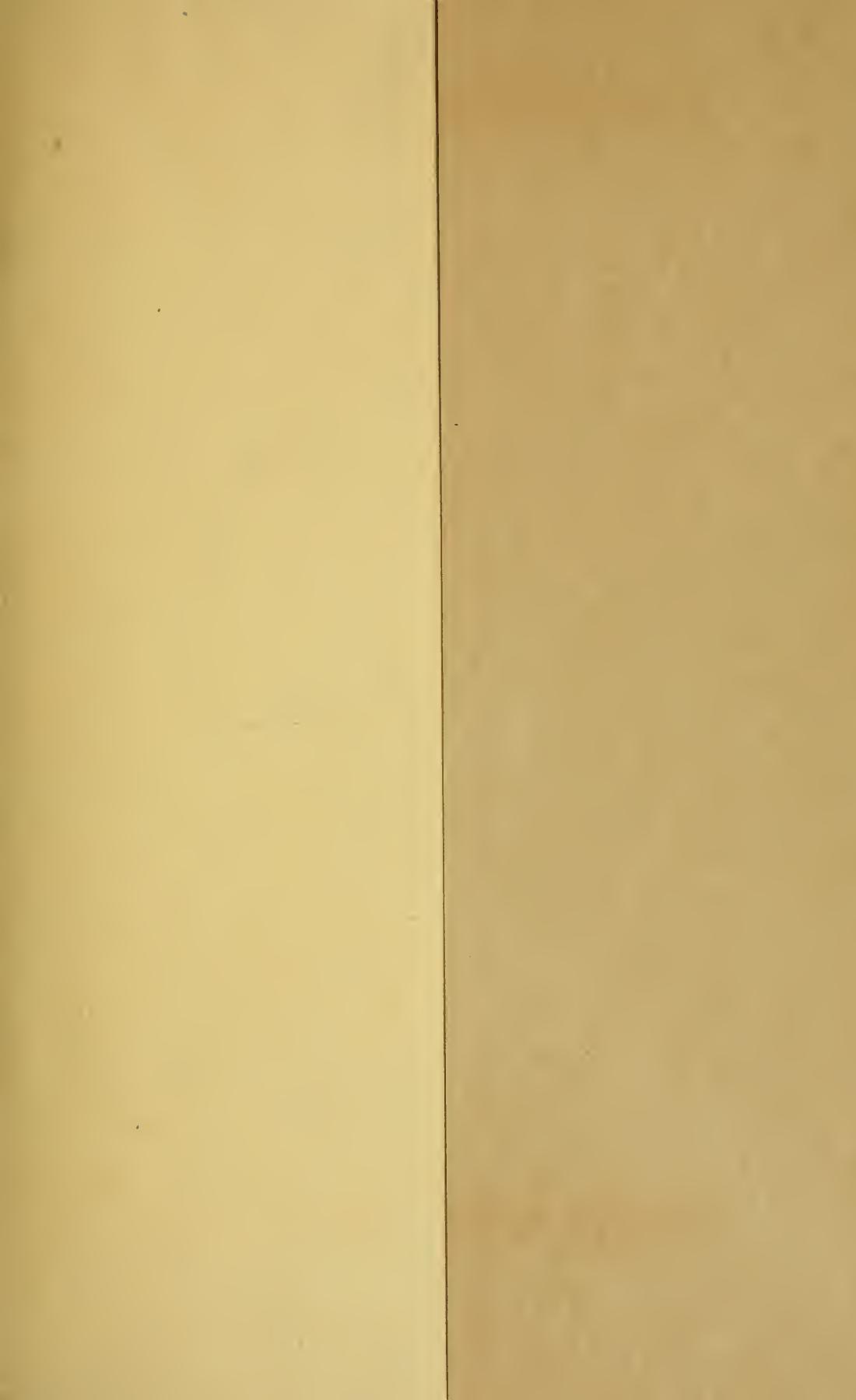
And without the slightest misgiving,
That eve as the sun hung low,
We took Northeast by the compass,
For we had but one night to go.
Along in the early morning,
When we could hardly see,
Billy pitched into a badger hole
And broke his front legs at the knee.

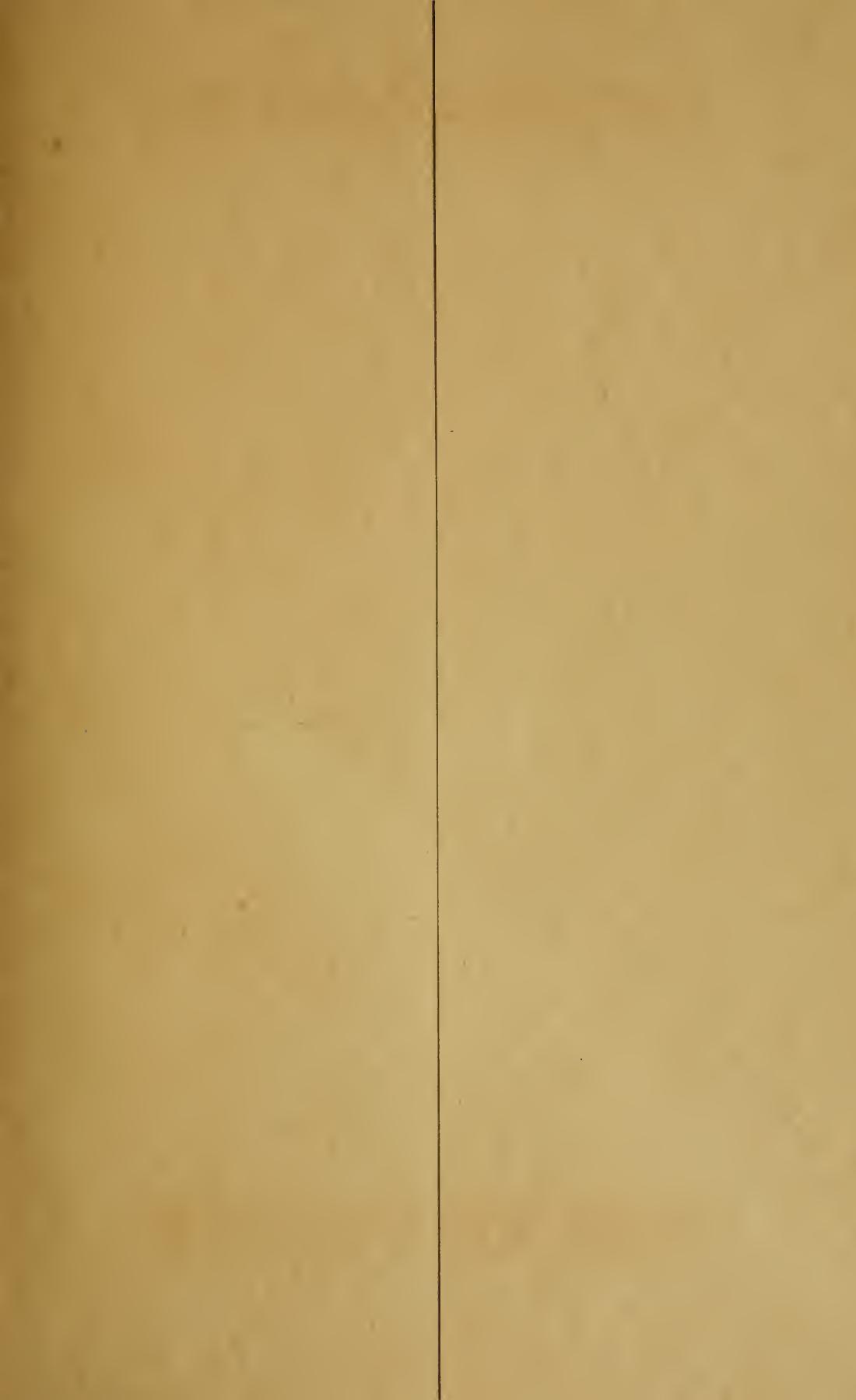
It's a well known fact among horsemen,
However hard they may beg;
There's only one thing to do in a case
Where a pony breaks his leg.
Take off the saddle and shoot him
No matter where you may be;
And I had to do this to my Billy—
But he'd a done the same thing for me.

Have you ever sat by the still remains
Of a good and faithful friend,
And wished that you, instead of he,
Had journeyed to the end?
Well that is how I felt that night
As I sat by Billy's side;
So don't think that I'm weak-hearted
When I tell you that I cried.

I took up that heavy saddle,
And toted it into camp,
But my heart still carries a heavier load
As through this life I tramp;
For when I lost my Billy,
I lost what seemed to be
The best friend mortal ever had—
It seems that way to me.







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